

OT 9. P.E.N.

(Poets, Playwrights,
Essayists
Novelists)

500 U.S. Writers Ask Soviet To Free Sinyavsky and Daniel

More than 500 American authors, editors and publishers have petitioned the Soviet Government to grant amnesty to Andrei D. Sinyavsky and Yuli M. Daniel, the two Russian writers jailed in February, 1966.

The petition, sponsored by the American Center of the P.E.N. Club, was sent last week to the Soviet Embassy in Washington for transmittal to President Nikolai V. Podgorny. P.E.N., a world organization of poets, playwrights, editors, essayists and novelists, has 80 chapters with about 8,000 members.

The petition was the latest and most extensive effort by Western intellectuals to seek the freedom of the two Russians, who were convicted on charges of having published abroad materials judged hostile to the Soviet regime. Mr. Sinyavsky, who is 42, was sentenced to seven years at hard labor and Mr. Daniel, also 42, was sentenced to five years.

The two writers were excluded from the amnesty the Soviet Government decreed for political prisoners last Oct. 31, even though repercussions of the Sinyavsky-Daniel case continued to trouble the Soviet intellectual community and to draw criticism from abroad.

The amnesty was issued as an act of "socialist humanism" in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. The anniversary was cited in the P.E.N.-sponsored petition as offering an occasion for "a special amnesty" for Mr. Sinyavsky and Mr. Daniel.

'Memorable Contribution'

"Let the Soviet Government now assert the right of its citizens to speak and write freely," the petition said. "By doing so at this time of celebration, it will honor the tradition of its greatest creators and make a memorable contribution to world understanding."

Although previous appeals by P.E.N. and other literary or-

ganizations were rebuffed by the Soviet Union, Prof. Robert Halsband, president of the American Center of P.E.N., said yesterday that he felt that the chances for leniency might have improved because of the imprisonment earlier this month of four young intellectuals accused of anti-Soviet activity.

"It is quite possible that after this example of toughness, the Soviet Government might be ready to contemplate a humanitarian gesture," Mr. Halsband said.

Mr. Halsband, a professor of English literature at Columbia University, said that the signers of the petition were not confined to P.E.N. members.

Included among the 555 petitioners were such leading spokesman for liberal causes as Hannah Arendt, Daniel Bell, Max Lerner and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., as well as political conservatives such as William F. Buckley Jr. and Isaac Don Levine.

Some of the prominent writers who endorsed the petition were: Conrad Aiken, Edward Albee, Hortense Calisher, Paddy Chayevsky, Babette Deutsch, Allen Ginsberg, Eric Hoffer, Christopher Isherwood, Bernard Malamud, Herbert J. Muller, Lewis Mumford, Reinhold Niebuhr, Chaim Potok, Upton Sinclair, Isaac Bashevis Singer, William Styron, Louis Untermeyer, John Updike, Mark Van Doren, Theodore H. White and Herman Wouk.

Among the literary critics were Richard Ellman, Jason Epstein, Elliot Fremont-Smith, Elizabeth Janeway, Alfred Kazin, Stanley Kunitz, Harry Levin, Dwight Macdonald, Norman Podhoretz and Samuel Yellen.

The publishers included George Braziller, Frederick A. Praeger, Barney Rosset of Grove Press, Dagobert D. Runes of Philosophical Library, Harry Scherman, president of the Book-of-the-Month Club; Roger W. Straus of Farrar, Straus & Giroux; Arthur H. Thornhill Jr. of Little, Brown, Frederick Ungar and Arthur W. Wang.

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